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Senate Approves Stamas Bill Changing Sentencing Guidelines for Boating Hit-and-Run

Punishment would now be same as vehicular hit-and-run

LANSING—Today, the Michigan Senate unanimously approved legislation introduced by state Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, which would change the punishment for the operator of a boat involved in a hit-and-run accident which resulted in death or a crippling injury from a misdemeanor to a felony. This change makes the penalty for this crime the same as those for causing a hit-and-run accident in an automobile.

Currently, the driver of a boat involved in such an accident is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum sentence of 90 days. Under the changes proposed by Stamas in Senate Bills 658 and 659, someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing death would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines. Someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing serious impairment would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 5 years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

In September of 2002, 33 year-old Brent Veitengruber of Linwood was killed in a hit-and-run boating accident on Wixom Lake in Gladwin County. The operator of the other boat was convicted of negligent homicide and negligent crippling, a two-year high court misdemeanor, and was sentenced this July to one year in jail.

“This is a necessary change in the law that makes common sense,” Stamas said. “I am glad to see my colleagues in the Senate agree and it is my hope that the House will see fit to move these bills in an equally prompt fashion.”

Senate Bills 658 and 659 now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Comments can be recorded from the Senate Majority Communications Hotline. Dial (517) 373-4000, then follow the menu to the desired senator's comments.

Comments and broadcast quality video (uncompressed Quicktime movie file) may also be downloaded from the Michigan Senate Republican Audiowire web site at:
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/index.htm>.

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